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[Mesa Legend](#)

Rep. Harry Mitchell, D-Ariz., is one of many who sponsored the new Post 9/11 GI Bill into law this year. This means that veterans now have four years of college money instead of only three.

"Roughly 1,200 students use their GI Bill at MCC per semester," said Cesar Bolet, who works for the veterans' office at Mesa Community College.

This figure does not include the many veterans attending MCC without using their benefit money, or veterans who do not know they have this money available.

The army does not advertise a free college education for veterans once they have been discharged. To access the funds veterans have to research and apply for them and many simply do not.

The current bill provides a stipend of approximately \$1,000 per month for each student, but many veterans do not know how to access it. Others have trouble qualifying for various reasons.

Some veterans have applied, but are still waiting to receive their stipend and book money.

The Veterans Administration mails out advance pay checks in certain cases when the wait is long. "The main problem is getting started," Bolet said.

Students from many different majors including engineering, nursing, and law, have used the GI Bill to begin their education at MCC.

Of those who have received the money, many start at the community college level and transfer to ASU or another university.